

THE MOCKINGBIRD



Volume XXXIV, Number 12
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172nd Airlift Wing "Wings of the Deep South" Jackson, MS



**Drill Days Left Until
The ORI:
22**



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MOCKINGBIRD

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publicaffairs@msjack.ang.af.mil

All information for submission MUST BE RECEIVED PRIOR TO CLOSE OF BUSINESS SATURDAY of each drill weekend to be included in the next issue! Articles should be in Microsoft Word DOC format and should be limited to one double-spaced page. Photos and graphics must be furnished separately in high resolution JPG or TIFF formats or as a hard copy.

CIRCULATION: 1,600



Your Health and the Air National Guard

The recent death of one of our members has reminded us the importance of taking one's health seriously. The Medical Group's role has changed from one of doing complete physicals to one of health screening exams. The SF 507 health questionnaires are an important part of this process. It is imperative that the individual give full disclosure on this form and if needed, discuss any problems with a provider.

More American women and men die of heart disease each year than any other cause. The good news is cardiovascular disease is mostly preventable. Better lifestyle habits can help you reduce your risk for heart attack. Here are five tips:

You Are What You Eat Better food habits can help you reduce your risk for heart attack. A healthful eating plan means choosing the right foods to eat and preparing foods in a healthy way. Eat the right fats in the right amounts. Limit or avoid saturated fats like butter, bacon and sour cream. Polyunsaturated oils like corn oil or sunflower oil are preferable, and monounsaturated ones like olive oil and canola oil are even better. Even these healthier oils should be used in moderation, however; they still contain calories that can lead to a weight problem. Fish and fish oils and omega-3 fatty acids may be best, because they appear to lower blood triglycerides and blood pressure while reducing the risk of dangerous blood clotting.

Exercise & Fitness Swimming, cycling, jogging, skiing, dancing, walking and dozens of other activities can help your heart. Whether it is included in a structured exercise program or just part of your daily routine, all physical activity adds up to a healthier heart. Get physically active. Even moderate activities like walking 30 minutes a day are enough to provide protective benefits. Although the gain may not be as great, recent evidence indicates that you'll benefit even if you can manage only 10 minutes of activity at a time. Regular exercise, even for a brief interval, leads to better cardiovascular health.

Stop Smoking. Cigarette smoking is the most important preventable cause of premature death in the United States. It accounts for nearly 440,000 deaths each year, of which more than 135,000 are due to smoking related cardiovascular diseases. Cigarette smokers are two to three times more likely to die from coronary heart disease than nonsmokers. If you are a smoker, quitting is the most important thing you can do for your heart's health. Even if you do not use tobacco, be careful to avoid exposure to second-hand smoke.

Know your numbers. The factors that raise your risk of heart attack include high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol and excess weight. Finding out where you stand in these risk factors is the first step toward lifestyle changes that can protect your heart.

Control your weight. Obesity, or being roughly 25 pounds overweight, lowers "good" HDL cholesterol and raises blood pressure, triglyceride levels, total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol. It can also induce diabetes, a major risk factor for heart disease. Even a modest reduction in weight — five to 10 percent — can reduce these health risks.

ON THE COVER

A C-17 does a short field touch and go on the new Assault Runway at Camp Shelby, Mississippi. The field recently opened for training in short field operations.

Photo By MSgt Andy Miller

The Skinny on Medicaid and Nursing Home Benefits

By LtCol Gregory Malta
Staff Judge Advocate

As the population of the United States grows older, the members of our unit populace and the ages of their dependents also increase, forcing many of our families to face the prospect of placing loved ones in professional care facilities. In a significant percentage of cases, the families rely upon the government for assistance to defray the exorbitantly high costs of long term health and retirement care.

Medicaid is the federal program that provides health insurance coverage for low-income children, seniors, and people with physical and mental disabilities. Additionally, Medicaid serves as a source to subsidize the payment of nursing home expenses and fees.

Each of the states, including Mississippi, operates its own Medicaid program subject to the rules established by the United States Congress and the federal centers for Medicare and Medicaid services. For your information and for your family's planning purposes, following is a summary of overriding regulations that control the assignment of payments for nursing home care or long term medical treatment.

Asset Rules

An individual may have no more than \$2,000 in "countable" assets to be eligible for Medicaid nursing home benefits. Assets that are not encompassed by this calculation include personal possessions, one motor vehicle valued up to \$4,500 for an un-married recipient and of any value for a recipient's spouse, a principal residence in the same state where the benefits are sought, pre-paid funeral plans and small amounts of life insurance and, finally, assets deemed by the government to be inaccessible.

To promote the independence of the nursing home resident's healthy husband or wife, that spouse may keep one half of the couple's countable assets, up to a maximum of \$92,760. The least that a state may allow the community spouse to retain is \$18,552. The couple's assets are totaled as of a "snapshot date", which is when a spouse enters a long-term care facility in which he or she then stays for at least 30 days.

Transfer Penalty

To avoid giving benefits to those who present a false picture of poverty, there is a penalty that is imposed when people transfer assets from a potential patient's estate without receiving fair value in return. In such cases, the government divides the amount transferred by the average monthly cost of the nursing homes in the state. The applicant is then eligible for Medicaid during the resulting number of months.

Several provisions of federal laws and regulations limit the impact of the transfer penalty. First, Medicaid officials may consider only the transfers made during the 36 months preceding the application for benefits. For certain trusts, the capture period is 60 months. The time frame under scrutiny is known as the "look back period" by the government. As a result of the look back condition, it is prudent for those families who have a loved one entering a nursing home to not apply for benefits within three years of a large transfer for less than fair market value. Second, the transfer of assets to certain categories of individuals such as spouses and blind or otherwise disabled children will not give rise to a penalty. Finally, a penalty may be reduced to the extent an inappropriately transferred asset is partially returned to the patient's estate.

Treatment of Income

The starting point for dealing with a patient who receives income while obtaining Medicaid benefits is that nursing home residents are required to pay *all* of their income, less certain deductions, to the facility. Types of permitted deductions include a \$60 per month allowance for the resident's personal needs, an allowance for a non-resident spouse based upon his or her needs for support at home, a deduction for any medical costs not covered by insurance or Medicare / Medicaid including premiums for health insurance, and a deduction for any dependent children living at home. Income attributable solely to a non-resident spouse is off-limits and cannot be taken into account by the government when determining eligibility. Likewise, a non-resident spouse will not be required to use his or her income to support a wife or husband receiving Medicaid benefits at a nursing home.

Further Information

If you have any questions regarding this topic, I encourage you to consult your family attorney or one of the judge advocate officers at the Wing Legal Office, which is located on base in Building 129.

Wing Safety Office



Accident Prevention: Setting Goals

By SMSgt Robert E. Risher
172AW Safety Office

We recently completed the 101 Critical Days of Summer but now we have to be concerned about the other 264 days. In other words, every day is critical where safety and preventing accidents are concerned. What causes accidents? There may be several causes contributing to an accident. Lack of knowledge, taking short cuts, not paying attention to the job, violating safety rules and others, caused by the behavior of the individual. There also could be unsafe conditions or safety hazards that contribute to the accident.

Why is it so important to prevent accidents? Do you view accident prevention as a way to slow completion of a job? Perhaps you view it as a way of keeping your supervisor off your back.

A supervisor has many reasons for wanting their employees to work safely but employees must have a more important reason than just because their supervisor says it's required. They must have a personal reason. Your reason may be your family. What would they do if you were to be injured? How about your hobbies? Would you still be able to enjoy them with a serious disability?

What you do for a living is nothing more than a means toward a goal you set for yourself. That goal may be your children's education. You may plan to buy a home or a car. Maybe you want to retire and travel. Maybe your goal for now is just to make it to Friday night and go out on the town. Whatever your goals, they all generally tie some way into what you do for a living. And what you do for a living could be seriously derailed by an accident. All your goals can go up in smoke if you are injured and disabled.

A safety program is designed to help you reach your goals. It is not there to make your work harder or slower, or to meet some government guideline. Safety and accident prevention programs are designed to protect you so that you may reach your goals. When an unsafe act is pointed out to you the intent is to help you by eliminating obstacles or job hindrances and to ensure you arrive home in one piece.

January UTA Date Change Mark your calendars!!

The January 2007 UTA has been moved from the first weekend, January 6-7, to the second weekend, January 13-14.

Afterthoughts and Regrets

By SMSgt Robert E. Risher
172 AW Ground Safety Manager

Have you ever performed an unsafe act knowing that you could have done it a safer way? Below are some afterthoughts which, unfortunately, too many of us have experienced:

“That’s how we’ve always done it before.” (before the accident occurred anyway.)

“I never thought that a little bolt dropped from that distance would cause so much bleeding.” (I should have worn a hard-hat, I guess.)

“If I had taken that first-aid/CPR course, I probably could have helped him.” (and chances are, he would still be here.)

“I should have taken care of that board with the projecting rusty nails earlier.” (Now, I have to take off work to get a tetanus shot.)

“Wow, I never realized that a fire could get out of control so fast.” (If I’d called the Fire Department before trying to put it out myself, I might still have a place to work tomorrow.)

“I know they were always preaching that we should lift with the leg muscles instead of the back muscles.” (What in the world is a herniated disk?)

“My safety glasses were in the tool box, but I was just going to grind off this one little piece.” (I wonder if they’ll let me drive with only one eye?)

“We were only going to use the scaffold for one day. I never thought a hammer would fall off the plank and strike someone.” (I had a hunch I should have taken the time to install the toe-boards.)

“They always insisted that the tool rest should be no more than one-eighth inch from the grinding wheel. What difference does another quarter-inch make?” (I was lucky not to go blind when the chisel got wedged and the wheel exploded into a thousand pieces.)

Any of this sound familiar?

It’s been said that hindsight is the only perfect science – but foresight could have avoided these incidents, injuries, misfortunes and regrets!

Learn from others’ mistakes and you will have no regrets.

Stay Safe and Always Think Before You Act!!

Intelligence Officer Vacancy

The Intelligence office has a vacancy for an Intelligence officer.

The applicant Must meet the following criteria:

A 4 year degree from a credited college.

You must be able to possess a Top Secret clearance.

You must attend the 6 month Intelligence School at Goodfellow AFB, Tx.

Must be able to complete commissioning program for the Air National Guard.

Have taken the AFOQT.

Must be able to deploy on short notice.

Have the required scores on the ASFAB.

For more information, contact the Intel Office at x8251



Students Can Apply for DeCA Scholarships at Commissaries

By Bonnie Powell
Defense Commissary Agency

FORT LEE, Va. (AFPN) — The Scholarships for Military Children Program applications, sponsored by the Defense Commissary Agency, are now available for 2007.

Applications for the \$1,500 scholarships are available at 264 commissaries worldwide, or can be downloaded through links at www.commissaries.com, www.militaryscholar.org or www.dodea.edu.

"Scholarships for Military Children is a wonderful military community program," said Patrick Nixon, DeCA director and chief executive officer. "Nearly 3,000 scholarships totaling over \$4 million have been awarded since the first awards were given in 2001."

The \$1,500 scholarships are available for children of military active-duty, retired, Guard and Reserve servicemembers. Most of the funds are donated by manufacturers, brokers and suppliers selling groceries in commissaries; every dollar donated to the program by industry or the general public goes to fund the scholarships. The program is administered by the Fisher House Foundation.

A significant number of scholarships, about 10 percent every year, go to high school students at Department of Defense schools overseas.

"Every cent that community organizations can mobilize to support college-bound students is an investment in the future," said Joseph Tafoya, director of the Department of Defense Education Activity.

"With college costs soaring, our DOD students and their parents appreciate every available scholarship to help defray the cost, and the scholarships enable many of our families to better afford the tuition and provide an incentive for students to work hard," Mr. Tafoya said.

"They also demonstrate that military communities are committed to education and increased opportunities for all students," he said.

The scholarship program has also made inroads to increasing support from the "nonmilitary" community. California high school students sponsoring golf tournaments in 2006 raised thousands of dollars to donate to the program, and already for 2007, a private foundation has made a substantial donation.

"We're excited to see this worthwhile program gaining recognition and funding from the community at large, said Jim Weiskopf, vice president of communications at Fisher House Foundation.

"Commissary industry support has been amazing and increased public support can only help ensure that the Scholarships for Military Children program continues to benefit the military community for many years to come," Mr. Weiskopf said."

Donations can be made through the link at www.militaryscholar.org, the official program Web site.

Applications for 2007, which includes an essay on "how and why" the applicant would change an historical event, must be turned in at a commissary by close of business Feb. 21, 2007. At least one \$1,500 scholarship will be awarded at every commissary location with qualified applicants.

The program is open to unmarried children under the age of 21 (23 if enrolled in school) of military active-duty, Reserve, Guard and retired personnel. Eligibility will be determined using the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System database. Applicants should ensure that they, as well as their sponsor, are enrolled in the DEERS database and have a current ID card.

The applicant must be planning to attend, or already attending, an accredited college or university full-time in the fall term of 2007, or enrolled in a program of studies designed to transfer directly into a four-year program.

Armed Services YMCA

2007 Art Contest



“My Military Family”

Who can enter? Children of active duty and retired service men and women from all branches of the military, as well as the National Guard and Reserve, who are in kindergarten through sixth grade.

What to do? Students are asked to submit a color drawing on a 6 x 8 inch template provided by the Armed Services YMCA (ASYMCA). Oversized and three-dimensional entries will not be judged. Please do not identify family members on the drawing.

What do you win? First-place winners from each branch of service, National Guard and Reserve will be awarded a \$500 U.S. savings bond; second-place winners will receive a \$100 U.S. savings bond. All winning artwork will be featured on the ASYMCA Web site and on a Military Family Month poster, which will be distributed to members of Congress and Department of Defense officials.

Questions? Call 703/313-9600 ext. 10 or e-mail tharper@asymca.org.

Facts to know: In order to be eligible, you must submit a completed entry form, a recent photo of yourself (preferably a school picture), and your artwork on the ASYMCA template. All entries must be postmarked by February 16, 2007, and sent to:

ASYMCA, Attn: Art Contest
6359 Walker Lane, #200
Alexandria, VA 22310.

Armed Services YMCA

2007 Essay Contest

“Why My Military Dad/Mom Is My Hero”

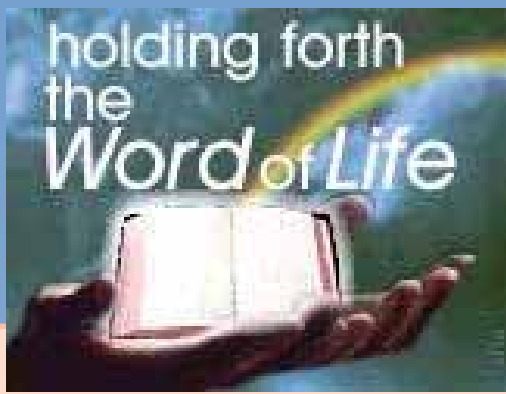
Who can enter? Children of active duty and retired service men and women from all branches of the military, as well as the National Guard and Reserve, who are in grades 1-12.

What to do? Students are asked to submit an essay about why their military mom or dad is their hero. Grades 1-8 must submit compositions with a minimum of 100 words, but no more than 300 words. Grades 9-12 must submit compositions with a minimum of 300 words and no more than 500 words.

What do you win? First-place winners in four grade categories (1/2, 3/4, 5/6, and 7/8) will receive a U.S. savings bond worth \$500; second place winners receive \$100. First-place winners in two grade categories (9/10 and 11/12) will receive a U.S. savings bond worth \$1,000; second place winners receive \$200; and two essays will be awarded \$100 for honorable mention.

Facts to know: In order to be eligible, you must send a completed entry form, a recent photo of yourself, and your essay by e-mail to tharper@asymca.org, or by mail to: ASYMCA, Attn: Essay Contest, 6359 Walker Lane, #200, Alexandria, VA 22310. All essays must be e-mailed or

Questions? Call 703/313-9600 ext. 10 or e-mail tharper@asymca.org. Visit www.asymca.org for complete rules and entry forms. All essays and photos become the property of ASYMCA and will not be returned.



Airlift Uplift

*Merry Christmas
And A
Happy New Year*

From the 172nd AW Chaplain's Office